

42/2018 Hon. Jiosefa Dulakiverata to ask the Minister for Industry, Trade, Tourism, Lands and Mineral Resources – Can the Minister advise the House on the number of applications pending for license to extract gravel and the cause of delay in processing each of these pending applications.

The Ministry has now put in place systems, processes, checks, and databases to monitor daily operations. The number of applications pending for licenses is twenty-four (24). The procedure is an inter-ministerial and inter-departmental process within the Ministry of Lands. The stringent requirements are due to the necessity of the sustainable development of natural resources. The inter-ministerial process involves the Ministry of Environment for the Environmental Impact Approval. Furthermore the iTaukei Affairs Board verification of consent to waive traditional fishing rights process must also be undertaken. Lastly, the Mineral Resources Department conducts its own verification process which includes Rock Resource Verification. Under the Regulation 29 of the State Lands Act, the license once all these processes are completed is granted by the Director of Lands, except cases with need consultation with the Minister.

There is a timeframe of 15 days stipulated within the Standard Operating Procedures of the Ministry of Lands. Timeframes from respective agencies falls outside the 15 working days. The Environmental Impact Assessment involves approximately 3 months whereas Itaukei Affairs Board verification falls within a time frame of 10 working days.